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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

¶1. SUMMARY: Local papers focused heavily on International Criminal Court (ICC) action against the Sudanese president, with government-owned daily "Oman" calling it a plot by superpowers to rob Sudan. "Oman" expressed optimism over U.S. participation in the Geneva talks on the Iranian nuclear issue. Privately owned "Al Watan" finished a three-article series on Trafficking In Persons (TIP), calling on GCC countries to unite efforts to engage with objective international organizations. END SUMMARY.

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ICC Targeting of State Leaders is "Barbaric Action"  
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¶2. On July 16, government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) signaled the discovery of oil in Sudan and subsequent Arab investment as reasons for the ICC's indictment of Sudan's president for war crimes. According to "Sudanese President and the International Criminal Court (ICC)":

"Since Chinese companies began oil exploration in Sudan and subsequent Arab investment, Sudan has attracted the attention of superpowers. Those powers started using Sudan's internal problems as excuses to insult and insinuate themselves. It is clear that these superpowers are pursuing a divide and rule strategy against Sudan through the ICC. This is an obvious agenda asserted by some nations to bring down governments by using legitimate organizations for legal cover. They should know that Sudan is not a member of the ICC. Targeting leaders of states is a barbaric action that must be stopped. The position of the African Union and GCC is honorable. They condemned the ICC decision, and we hope to see the same action by the Arab League ministerial meeting next Saturday."

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"Signs of Hope" Regarding U.S. Position on Iran  
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¶3. On July 19, Arabic daily "Oman" expressed optimism at Undersecretary of State William Burns' participation at the Geneva meeting between European and Iranian negotiators. "Yes, There is Hope" said:

"If the participation of William Burns [in Geneva] is a turning point in America's attitude...and if we see diplomatic offices open and airlines conduct direct flights between the two countries, then this would show signs of hope regarding the U.S.'s position. Progress cannot take place overnight. It would results only from great effort, effort which could lead to great prosperity in the region. This meeting might prevent the whole world from witnessing another war."

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GCC States Must Coordinate Efforts in Response to TIP  
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14. On July 20, private Arabic daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) published the last article in a series written by the economic editorialist Salem al Abdali on human trafficking. "Trafficking in Persons, Definition and Goals" said:

"Oman has an organized system, defined by laws and regulations, to bring in labor. If there are individual abuses and violations, this should not lead to generalizations of the whole country. Omani laws and regulations do not discriminate between citizens and expatriates. International organizations have an important role in the preparation of comprehensive and clear reports on trafficking through fact finding committees based on objective principles and criteria. GCC states must coordinate their efforts in response to America's accusations. Facts must be clarified in this matter because GCC countries attract large numbers of foreign laborers. The GCC must intensify information dissemination and media campaigns, issue reports and official statements, and invite specialists from international organizations to visit GCC countries to see the situation on the ground."

GRAPPO